



City of Biggs

Agenda Item Staff Report for the Regular City Council Meeting: July 18, 2011 6:00PM

DATE: July 13, 2011
TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM: Pete Carr, City Administrator/Finance
SUBJECT: Public Works Crew Vacancy (Discussion/Action)

City Administrator will present background and options for the vacant crew position in City Public Works.

Background

The City has one working superintendent and four line employees to operate the water and wastewater systems, maintain the infrastructure for these utilities, and maintain all streets, storm drainage, sidewalks, parks, signage, city-owned buildings and corporation yards. Regulatory compliance, technical training, safety and security issues add to the burden of tasks and responsibilities, as well as challenges with weather, vandalism, and special events like parades and holiday lighting. Each of the four crew employees, of course, is 25% of the crew staffing.

The City Council in January approved by Resolution a staffing guideline as part of adoption of the revised Employee Manual.

One crew position became unexpectedly vacant in June. Council on June 20th authorized temporary filling of the position and requested a staff report on the subject of a permanent replacement. Identifying, pre-employment testing and starting the temporary employee was accomplished by July 7. The temporary employee works 40 hours/week at the starting wage of \$12.12/hr with no benefits.

Biggs also benefits from the 25-hr/wk assistance of a Workability program helper paid entirely by the County. This help is available only when all union-represented City positions are filled. Our contract with PERS requires health and pension benefits to be provided to employees who regularly work over 20 hours per week.

Water and wastewater operations are constant year-round, with more intensity on water ops in summer and wastewater treatment in the winter. The crew's workload is also seasonally impacted in colder weather by prevention of local flooding, street

repairs and post-storm clean-up of the city, then shifts in warmer weather to parks and right-of-way maintenance.

The impact of not filling the position can be expected to be reduction or elimination of special projects being accomplished in-house like sidewalk repairs, gutter valley replacements, basic fleet maintenance and support for special events. We would also lose the part-time county-paid worker if a permanent position is left vacant.

Options:

1. Authorize filling the Crew 1 position on a permanent basis per the Employee Manual.
2. Authorize only temporary fill of the Crew 1 position with stated end date and acknowledgement of reduced expectations of the Public Works staff and loss of County-paid helper.
3. Eliminate the Crew 1 position and acknowledge reduced expectations of the Public Works staff.
4. Eliminate the Crew 1 position and contract for the following functions:
 - o Street cleaning (8hrs/wk winter, 8hrs every other week summer)
 - o Landscape functions (40 hrs/wk park maint, mowing, etc. in summer, more variable in winter)
 - o Janitorial functions (1-2 hrs/wk as discussed, currently investigating)
 - o Mechanical maintenance (1-2 hrs/wk some scheduled some as needed for oil changes, etc)

In either Options 2 or 3, City may want to consider contracting out some parts of the Public Works function, perhaps as outlined in Option 4. However, other municipalities are meeting with mixed results on this effort. The variety of skills employed throughout the workday and across seasons would be an issue here, as would the impact of reduced crewing on job flexibility due to the already small size of our workforce.

- o Appointments, training, sick days and vacation coverage are much more difficult to cover with 3 crew members than 4.
- o Pipe replacement in a street requires 1-2 traffic control, 1 on equipment, at least 1 mobile.
- o Confined space requires minimum 3 personnel.
- o Hot mix paving requires 4 personnel.
- o Standby and call-out OT pay would shift more to higher paid employees.

Attachment: City Employee Manual Staffing Guideline

Recommendation

Authorize administrator to fill the vacant Public Works position on a permanent basis per the Employee Manual.

Fiscal Impact:

Budget assumed full staffing. New employee would be at lower wage (\$2800/yr less than budget) and possibly lower benefits cost to the City than was budgeted.

CITY OF BIGGS – CLASSIFICATION PLAN – STAFFING REQUIREMENTS GUIDELINE

Approved by City Council November 15, 2010
Adopted by Resolution into City Employee Manual January 24, 2011
Effective October 1, 2010

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

1. Staffing requirements are determined and reconsidered from time to time by the city administrator in consultation with the city council. City administrator is expected to keep required positions filled, and to not add new positions or refill vacant positions without approval of the council.
2. This schedule will be revised from time to time by City Council; revision to this manual is not required in each case. As of October 2010 the authorized city staffing is as follows:

City Administrator	1
Public Works Superintendent	1
Public Works Supervisor	0
Planning Assistant/ Code Enforcement	.5 to 1
Finance Director	0
Accounting Technician	2
Senior Accounting Clerk	0
Accounting Clerk	0
Administrative Assistant	0
Chief Plant Operator Level 3 License	0
Treatment Plant Operator Level 2 License	1
Treatment Plant Operator Level 1 License	0 or 1
City Crew III Water System Operator	1
City Crew II Equipment Operator	1 or 2
City Crew I General Maintenance	0 or 1

3. Public Works crew consists of one management superintendent and four employees, at least one of whom is a licensed Level II WWTP plant operator; prefer to have two licensed WWTP operators. One employee will have water treatment Level I and water distribution Level II licenses. Two employees will be equipment operators and/or general maintenance.